

AU REVOIR FRED STEVENS

Away back about in 1911 Fred Stevens, a bright faced youngster joined the P.M.G.'s Department as a telegraph messenger — today November 15th, 1962 he retires in the fullness of time from the Department and the service he has served so well.

Fred has had a very full and colourful career, some of the highlights of which are: that he holds the number one Flight Radio Operator's licence, he had a Navigator and Pilot's ticket and also a Flight Engineer's licence.

Sometime early in the first world war he joined the Navy as a radio operator and almost immediately got a shore appointment to lonely Esperance, but was sent to New Guinea instead. Later, many well known ports of the world were in his itinerary. After the real war ended and the phoney peace began Fred, amongst other achievements, had that of being the radio operator who kept in sole contact with the late Sir Charles Kingsford Smith during his epic Pacific Flight in the 'Southern Cross'; he later joined Qantas as a Flight Radio Operator, later becoming Navigator and Pilot on the Sydney-Singapore run — Sometime here, either before Qantas or just after, he was for a while station engineer at 4QG Brisbane when it was a commercial station.

In 1937 he rejoined the Commonwealth Public Service

in the old Civil Aviation Board while it was still a branch of the Defence Department.

In 1942 the call to active service was too strong to resist and he joined the R.A.A.F. as a Signals Officer. Here he served on special duties directed from R.A.A.F. Headquarters until the end of hostilities, when he rejoined the now Department of Civil Aviation as Superintendent of Airways Operations in Queensland and in 1949 he transferred to the same position in N.S.W. In 1954, when Ted Betts moved overseas, Fred came to Head Office as Superintendent of Communications and it is from this position that he now retires. He will, this afternoon, receive a farewell presentation from his Head Office associates. Tonight, in the Henty Theatre, the farewell will be in the usual style and a presentation, to which his many friends throughout the Commonwealth have contributed, will be made to him.

The writer has only known Fred since his R.A.A.F. days, when we first met at the foot of Castle Hill, Townsville, but the friendship has continued and many times recently he has come to my aid, as Editor of A.I.R., with the contribution of many interesting articles for A.I.R. under the nom de plume "The Paid Tourist". We hope he gives us more enjoyment with more articles of his many and varied experiences. It is the wish and hope of all that he long enjoys his days of his retirement.